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# Thoughts      Adrift

*Poems by Hattie Horner Louthan*





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# Thoughts Adrift

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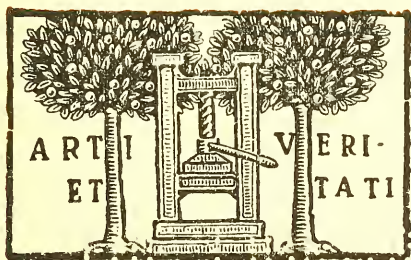
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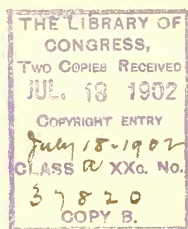
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To  
Overton Earle Louthan





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# THOUGHTS ADRIFT



## INVITATION

'To mountain lands  
Where Nature stands  
And beckons with her flower-filled hands,  
'To lie at rest  
On Nature's breast,  
Where purple mountains dim the west.

To lie, to dream,  
Where onward stream  
Flows down 'mid ferns, a crystal gleam,  
In shadows deep,  
'To hear, to keep  
What tales the wild flowers tell in sleep.

To rest, to lie  
'Neath cloudless sky,  
All undisturbed, my dreams and I,  
Here, here to sink,  
Sweet ease to drink,  
What more can mortal ask or think?

No harshness rude  
The solitude  
Here breaks, nor human steps intrude;  
Alone we lie,  
My dreams and I,  
Beneath the blue of faultless sky.

The dove's low call,  
The waterfall —  
Of sounds to waken, these are all;  
The cool winds woo,  
The mountains blue  
Stretch out their welcoming hands to you.

O slaves to greed,  
This message heed,  
Leave off your quest for gold, and speed  
To mountain lands  
Where Nature stands,  
And beckons with her flower-filled hands.

## THE FAWN

Oh, where shall I flee from the huntsman?

Oh, where can I hide from his eyes?

On hillslopes where once there was safety

Now never a hiding-place lies.

In fear must we feed in the forest,

In trembling must range o'er the field,

Each shrub is a trap or an ambush,

Each tree is the enemy's shield.

The once taintless breaths of the mountain

With strong scents of danger abound,

The silence that once was unruffled

Is fretted with baying of hound.

In vain do we gather for safety,

In vain do we scatter and hide;

There is blood on the sward of the open,

And blood on the mountain brook's tide.

No rest by the stream-side at noonday,

No rest in the thicket by night,

For rifles are sleepless, relentless,

And bullets are swifter than flight.

On hillslope, in forest, on mountain,

Now never a hiding-place lies;

Oh, where shall I flee from the huntsman?

Oh, where can I hide from his eyes?

## A MOUNTAIN LULLABY

Over the range in the shadowy west,  
    Bringing you rest,  
    Safe in your nest,  
Dream-birds come droning you here on my breast  
    Hush-a-bys soothing and strange.  
The sun has rolled over the rim high and steep,  
Star-eyes with baby are playing bo-peep,  
Wide-awake cares are beginning to creep  
    Over the range, far over the range.

Over the range in her snug silver nest,  
    Sinking to rest,  
    Low in the west,  
Softly the moon, with her hands on her breast,  
    Joins in the songs sweet and strange.  
The wind tucks the clouds round the peaks cold  
    and bare,  
Sleepily kisses the columbine fair,  
Then hurries the day with its trouble and care,  
    Over the range, far over the range.

Over the range, at the night-queen's behest,  
    Dark'ning the crest,  
    Far in the west,  
Old Mother Sleep, in her slumber-robe dressed,  
    Comes, bringing Shadow and Change.  
Softly they smother the sunset so bright,  
Slowly the candles of heaven they light,  
Sweetly they beckon the lingering night  
    Over the range, far over the range.



## MAPLE LEAVES

Yes, I must go. The end is come at last  
Of all this idle, dreamy, sweet repose.  
How swift the days of springtime glided past,  
How sure the summer burns toward its close.  
Good-bye the haunts that idleness has known,  
The sighing trees, the drooping blades of corn,  
The lately burdened fields, now newly sown,  
The flowers that used to greet the light of morn.

I can not stay. The flowers will surely die,  
And autumn's hand will burnish hedge and brier,  
The swallows soon will to the southward fly,  
The maples change to monuments of fire.  
If we could only keep the meadows fair,  
The heavens blue, the flowers fresh and sweet,  
O Heart, what would we know of pain or care?  
And would we grieve because the hours are fleet?

The time grew, oh, so precious as it fled,  
I think we held eternity less dear.  
Why are you sad? Because the summer's dead?  
Because my going is so very near?  
Do joys unfold with leaves and then float down?  
Dear Heart, must absence doom our love to die?  
Ah me! these leaves I saved are curled and brown,  
And I am weeping . . . I must go . . . Good-  
bye.

## AUTUMN FANCIES

### I

Over the hills and over the meadows,  
Over the elm where the waters meet,  
Autumn is trailing her long brown shadows  
And bronzing the tips of the grasses sweet.

And out and away from the town, October  
Tries his brushes on hillsides brown,  
Touches and brightens the landscape sober,  
Out and away from the dusty town.

Oh, the hills and the brown, brown meadows!  
Oh, the elm where the waters meet!  
Oh, to rest in its cool, deep shadows,  
Out from the town, 'mong grasses sweet!

### II

The autumn strives with its moonlight mellow,  
And all the charms that the birds delight,  
The west wind soft and the sunshine yellow,  
To stay the swallows' southward flight.  
But the west wind sighs and the leaves are falling.  
The sun glows red in his baffled ire,  
The gray clouds stoop and the birds are calling:  
"Fly to the land of thy heart's desire!"

I catch a glimpse through the bright leaves  
    turning,  
Of trees all leafless, of blight and gloom,  
And I strive in vain, 'gainst my heart's strong  
    yearning,  
To stay its flight to the land of bloom.  
Fly southward, fly, O swift-winged swallow!  
Fly to the hot sun's kiss of fire,—  
Would with wings I could follow, follow,  
Speed away to my heart's desire!

### III

Under the sky that is lowly bending  
Down to the earth, I watching stand,  
And up from the west sail the slow clouds sending  
Drops of rain to the thirsty land.

The trees rejoice and the rain-cloud passes  
Over the new-sown fields of grain;  
The golden-rod and the tufted grasses  
Bow their thanks for the gentle rain.

Would that my mind were like the heaven,  
Only crossed by the clouds of thought,  
Would that my thoughts, like the clouds, were given,  
Known and prized for the good they wrought!

## NOVEMBER DAYS

"How short the days grow!" sighs my neighbor,  
As near to her casement she sits,  
To catch a last ray from the sunset,  
Where Twilight, a lost spirit, flits.  
It must be each day's growing shorter—  
The sun with his dull fading glow,  
The southward-bound birds, the bare treetops,  
All say: "Ah! how short the days grow!"

It must be. And yet with each sunrise  
A hope that is born in my breast  
Glow and climbs with the sun to the zenith,  
Then dies as he sinks in the west.  
Ah, neighbor, you're wrong; the days lengthen,  
The sun, birds and trees do not know;  
For my heart sighs each evening: "No letter—  
How long, oh, how long the days grow!"

### THREE GIFTS

"Three gifts have I," she softly said  
To him who stayed for choosing,  
"And one is thine." Her lips were red,  
Her smile was sweet, confusing.

"One is a kiss, a moment fleet  
With an age of rapture in it,  
A breath, but oh! so full, so sweet,  
'Tis worth a life to win it.

"One is a thought, both great and new,  
Thy name through all the ages  
Extolled shall be; the wise, the true  
Shall count thee with the sages.

"And one is a glimpse of the vast Unknown.  
Thy soul with undimmed vision  
Shall make its mysteries thine own,  
The bliss of realms Elysian.

"Three gifts have I." Her lips were red.  
(O heart, by impulse driven!)  
"I'll take the kiss," he quickly said,  
"Nor fame, nor hope of heaven."

## DISCARDED

Love is a weary, crownless cross,  
A flake of gold in an ounce of dross,  
A drop of gain in a sea of loss,  
    A briny sea.

Love weaves the cloak that Passion wears,  
Love sows life with choking tares  
    In demon glee,  
    Remorselessly!

Love leads up to illusions vain,  
Or down into gorges of deepest pain,  
Or out on the commonplace level plain,—  
    O false and fleet!

Love is the only prince that begs,  
Love is the only wine with dregs.  
    O smiling cheat!  
    O bitter-sweet!

Love is a tale that idlers tell,  
A cavern deep where shadows dwell,  
An angel-lure at the gates of hell  
    Where sin is rife.

Love has a longing that's never filled,  
Love has a cry that can not be stilled.  
    O ceaseless strife!  
    O death in life!

## IF ONLY

Only love me, Love, and winds may blow  
And clouds may stoop to veil the sun from sight,  
And flowers may fade, and June-time stay or go,  
To me the winter's chill, the summer's glow  
Alike pass by amid thy love's delight.

Only love me. Let the drops of care  
Beat heavy on me from the clouds above,  
Let every step before me prove a snare;  
Each untried sorrow still my soul will dare,  
And call it pleasure. Only love me, Love.

### "SO LONELY 'TIS!"

A bell is mute in the silver chime,  
For the robin's call there is no rhyme,  
Love's universe is out of time—  
Thou art not here!

The light is gone from the summer sky,  
The winds speak not as they pass me by,  
And shadows cold o'er the sad earth lie—  
Thou art not here!

The river's voice is but a moan,  
My heart cries out for thee, my own,  
In vain. I am alone, alone—  
Thou art not here!

## MUST I GO?

How can I go? My heart is not my own,  
But for your keeping long has left my breast.  
The night comes down and we two are alone,—  
O night most blest!  
And we recline where shadows deep are lying,  
I whisper you my secret soft and low;  
You turn away—I hear your gentle sighing,  
How can I go?

And must I go? What mean they, those low sighs?  
Look up, O Sweetheart, bid me go or stay.  
No words; I need but look into your eyes  
For yea or nay.  
Speak they the truth? Is this some blissful seeming?  
You lie against my breast . . . Ah me, I grow  
Drunk, mad with joy! Love, tell me, am I dreaming,  
Or must I go?

## SENSE-GIFT AND SOUL-GIFT

A book, a gem, or a blossom rare,  
For the friend that's near and dear,  
With greetings of the season fair,  
Now that the Christ-tide's here,  
Now that the gift-time's here.

But what for the friend we love no less,  
For the distant, silent friend?  
Ah, what of the soul's deep tenderness,  
Of the gifts we never send—  
Of the gifts we can not send?



## LOVE UNSPOKEN

Within the woodland, when the leaves were turning,  
    You checked your horse beneath the spreading  
        tree,  
And as we watched the western heavens burning,  
    You handed down a bitter-sweet to me.  
The roses fair had died with summer's going,  
    November's leaves were falling one by one,  
But yet the sombre woodlands all were glowing  
    With these, the fruit alike of frost and sun.

A rose had never been a gift in keeping  
    With love that lives alike through joy and pain,  
Yet when you smiled through eyes that told of  
    weeping  
    I knew, although sublime, our love was vain.  
And this was why, with almost painful gladness,  
    I crushed the fateful berries to my breast,  
And let my eyes tell all their tale of sadness,  
    Then left it with your heart to guess the rest.

And this was why, with white face full of grieving,  
    You rode again the path with briers grown.  
Ah me! you bore away the sweet in leaving,  
    And left me with the bitter there alone.  
Within the woodland, though the snow lies hoary,  
    Still glow the berries in their lone retreat;  
And in your eyes, still, still in veiled glory,  
    I read, of silent love, the bitter-sweet.

## TOGETHER

And art thou here? My heart scarce understands.  
Not gone? I stretch my hands, nor realize  
The joy . . . . And yet, why reach? We need  
not hands  
To know the sun is shining in the skies.

## TEMPTATION

Nay, kiss me no more. Through this half-waking  
sleep,  
I sense far below us a dangerous deep.  
The blind will stop short on the verge of a steep.

The impulse that urges the torrent's wide swing,  
The ruin and rage that the cataracts bring,  
Lie back in the throb at the heart of a spring.

The spirit that lashes the Maelstrom's mad swirl,  
That crushes and wrecks in its pitiless whirl,  
Is born of the foam that the playful winds hurl.

Oh, the pause of a soul at the yawning abyss!  
Oh, the wild surge of passion, the anguish, the bliss!  
Oh, the throb and the thrill of thy maddening kiss!

## BEREAVEMENT

O tender hands that soothed my pain, O voice  
That called my soul to noble thoughts and high,  
O buried faith! . . . . My God, how much of life  
The human heart may lose, and yet not die!

## INCONSTANCY

The Night unto the New Moon clung—  
O Moon so sweet, so fair, so young!  
And o'er his face her hair was flung,  
A veil of misty light.  
He said: "O Moon, why haste away?  
'Tis dark, so dark, without thy ray;  
I love thee as can not the Day."  
So sang the fickle Night.

The Moon upon Night's breast lay cold—  
O Moon so pale, so sad, so old!  
He said: "Why tarry, Moon? Behold  
How many hours thou'st stayed!  
These arms another soon shall fold—  
The Sun, all youth and warmth and gold."

\* \* \* \* \*

Then swift came Day, the conqueror bold.  
So died the Night, betrayed.

## EASTER SONG

Thou'rt here again, thou time of grief,  
    O Passion-tide!  
When doubts and fears have quenched belief,  
    O Passion-tide!  
The spirit-strife, the sweat, the tear,  
The trial, the cross, the gloom, the fear,  
The tomb,—no rays of hope to cheer,  
    O Passion-tide, sad Passion-tide!

Thou'rt here again with deathless hope,  
    O Easter morn!  
No more in deepest night we grope,  
    O Easter morn!  
No more of fear, no more of gloom,  
Thy resurrection lilies bloom,  
For Christ has burst the sealèd tomb,  
    O Easter morn, sweet Easter morn!

## PROVIDENCE

The brooding dove in her nest apart  
Thrills and would speed the night;  
But a followed fawn with its timid heart  
Shrinks from the coming light.

The gull swoops down and with hungry eyes  
Waits for the ebb of the tide;  
But a stranded weed on the sand-bar lies  
And longs for the in-flood wide.

The corn in his fluttering pennants dressed  
Sighs for the wind's increase;  
But the frail down clings to the thistle's breast  
And prays that the wind may cease.

## TWO MEN

### CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

Toward the West he cast his longing view,  
As with his chart and astralobe in hand,  
He mused upon that undiscovered land,  
Then spake: "*Here is one world,—let there be  
two!*"

### CYRUS W. FIELD

Toward the East, beneath the kindly sun  
Gazed one in after years whom science taught;  
He mused upon a thing his brain had wrought  
Then spake: "*Here are two worlds,—let there  
be one!*"

TO O. E. L.

So that the path be God-ward and with thee,  
I little care how thorns beset the way,  
Nor how the clouds obscure the light of day,  
So that God's love and thine my soul may see.

I little care how long the way may be,  
How sharp the turns that shut the road from  
sight;  
My soul will sing thanksgiving day and night,  
So that the path be God-ward and with thee.

TO A. T. E.

The tide is yearning for the moon,  
The streamlet for the sea,  
The frozen dawn for sun of noon,  
The Northland for the smile of June,  
All earth for summer's rhyme and rune,  
And I for thee!

The eagle from the vale ascends  
To crag and mountain pine,  
The southbound bird her swift wing bends,  
The mist-cloud with the sunbeam blends,  
And soul to nobler soul up-trends,  
As mine to thine!

TO C. D. C.

I greet thee, as the year is growing old.  
The glancing pen-shaft that my fingers hold,  
To stranger eyes, leaves only threads of ink  
On paper cold.

But o'er the paper, through the words I trace,  
To light and glorify their common-place,  
Love etches precious lines for me alone,  
And lo! thy face.

TO MARY

Thou dost not grow weary of the cheer  
Of roses, though they come with every year;  
Nor of the bobolinks that sweetly sing,  
Albeit they come with each recurring spring.

Are not kind wishes sweeter than the rose?  
And loving thoughts than all the song bird knows?  
Wouldst thou grow weary, if whate'er befell,  
This self-same message to thy heart I'd tell  
Each Christmas-tide: "I love thee, wish thee  
well"?

## TO EUDORA

Since thoughts have wings,  
Straight to the sunshine of thy cheering smile,  
From wintry sky,  
As linnets southward, mile on severing mile,  
My thoughts do fly,  
Time, space defy,  
Since grateful thoughts have wings.

Since prayers have wings,  
Around thy path by day, thy couch by night,  
Low, hovering low,  
As guardian spirits through the dark and light,  
My prayers do go,  
Nor hindrance know,  
Since earnest prayers have wings.

If love had wings,  
Not thought and prayer alone to thee would speed;  
Through dangers faced,  
Nor task, nor weight, nor weariness to heed,  
I, I would haste,  
O'er wold and waste,  
If only love had wings.



## PROCRASTINATION

Through budding trees the South Wind sighed  
And said: "In silence yet abide,  
Thy message for thy friend confide  
    To me, and take thine ease;  
And I'll repeat it word for word,  
I'll sing it soft as note of bird,  
It will be welcome, though deferred,"  
    Thus tempted me the Breeze.

'Neath burdened trees of June-time fair,  
A Sunbeam glanced through fragrant air,  
And thrilled me as I slumbered there,  
    And dreamed of thee, of thee.  
"Stir not," it said with warm caress,  
"Deep, fervent, wordless tenderness,  
To her I'll bear." And I confess  
    I yielded languidly.

O'er leafless trees the Rain Cloud sailed,  
The forest, stript, her loss bewailed;  
In stillness deep the echoes failed,  
    And hoar frost, like a shroud,  
Enwapt the wood and mountain ledge.  
"Wouldst thou thy friendship old repledge?  
Send me, for words were sacrilege,"  
    So spake the passing Cloud.

On ghostly trees His Star shines clear.  
O Thou whose natal hour is here,  
Come forth and break the silence drear  
    That locketh Friendship Land.  
The South Wind's song, O Heart most dear,  
The Sun's warm kiss, the Rain Cloud's tear,  
All these, my love-lines of the year,  
    *Now* thou wilt understand!

## DELUSION

The fisher lad stooped from his skiff-side,  
To dip his net in the sea,  
When up from the deep, deep water,  
A face looked smilingly.  
A face in a frame of sunlight,  
With a smile like the rippling wave,  
With lips that would tempt and trouble,  
And eyes that would calm and save.

He gazed too long for his future,  
Too long for his peace of mind,  
He poured his soul in his worship,  
Devoted, ceaseless, blind.  
He swept his net through the water,  
But the vision passed away;  
The wave grew calm, but it came not,  
Though he watched through many a day.

He never knew 'twas a maiden,  
That leaned from the rock above,  
Whose face had looked from the sea-depth,  
With eyes like a dream of love.  
He never knew, though he passed her,  
Each day, as to and fro,  
Weary and sick with longing,  
To his task he'd sadly go.

So we gaze in the future's waters,  
For the visions they portray,  
So we long for the unreturning,  
Nor heed the blest To-day;  
So we cast our nets for the shadows,  
Fleet phantoms of the tide,  
Nor dream in our blind delusion,  
That the Real is at our side.

## THE GREAT DELIVERANCE

Calm Egypt slept. The veil of heavy night  
Hung darkly 'twixt the desert and the sky.  
Above the sleeping land that dreamed no harm,  
The sullen clouds stooped low and threateningly,  
And through the darkness and the silence deep,  
No voice of solemn warning breathed aloud:  
“*Prepare to meet thy God!*” The soft night wind  
That crept from house to house with noiseless tread  
Repeated not: “*Thy first-born all must die!*”  
The bird that moved upon the midnight bough  
Said not: “*The hour is come!*”—nor yet the stars  
That stood above the land. The night wore on,  
And Egypt slept.

The night wore slowly on,  
And Israël, by the dimly burning light,  
Did watch with anxious heart. The lamb was slain  
And on the lintel had the blood been struck.  
The cloth was spread, the hurried meal was passed.  
With girded loins and ready sandaled feet,  
The eager bondsmen waited, longed and hoped—  
They knew not what!

And now the hour was come.  
The murky veil of night was torn by wings  
Of God's destroying angel swooping down  
To smite the land, and Egypt slept no more.  
A sudden cry broke on the air. 'Twas not  
The anguish of a single stricken heart;  
It rang from house to house, and swelling rose,  
A mournful chorus, a funereal wail  
The voice of Egypt mourning her first-born.

The angel passed, death hovered in his wake,  
But Israël's blood-stained door was left uncrossed.  
Night wore away. The stars above the land  
Went dimly out, and lo! the rising sun,  
Whose latest dying ray had looked on slaves,  
Saw Israël out of bondage, free at last!

Years, ages have rolled by. A deeper night  
Enfolds the land in darkness and in gloom.  
Above a careless world that dreams no harm,  
The clouds of doom stoop low and threateningly,  
And Justice whets her keen avenging sword.  
Still Egypt sleeps. God's awful warning words:  
*"The day thou eat'st thereof thou'lt surely die!"*  
Forgotten are. The scornful idler laughs,  
Unheeding that the hour is drawing nigh.  
O men, O brothers, are you faithful, true?  
Your candles, are they burning? Do you watch  
With girded loins, with anxious, hopeful hearts?  
The Lamb is slain, and if His saving blood  
Be on your lives, the angel will pass by,  
And with the rising sun, you'll quit  
Your bondage for the precious Promise Land.

## DRINKING SONG

*From "Serving His Probation"*

Sing ho! for the Grape. As the Mother Vine  
Swings it in tender fashion,  
It draws from her breast the love-brewed wine,  
This child of the Sun's fierce passion.  
Crush out from the full-fed, bursting veins  
The life of its lawless sire,  
That ruby life as it throbs and strains,  
It is blood and sun and fire!

Sing ho! for the Wine, the love-brewed Wine,  
That double life possesses,  
The bitter tears of the ravished Vine,  
And the burning Sun's caresses.  
Drain all the kisses, all the tears,  
The anguish and the gladness,  
Drink deep of love, its hopes and fears,  
Its folly and its madness.

Sing ho! for the Dream, the wine's best boon,  
Life's good is only seeming,  
A fancied joy, a breath of June,  
Oh, naught is real but dreaming.  
Drink, drink and dream! Time flies, love dies.  
What reck we of the morrow?  
Since Wine can give what Fate denies,  
Why wake to life and sorrow?

## SONG

*From "In the Shadow of the Peak"*

The warm Wind kisses the Rose of May,  
So daring!  
She turns not away nor says him nay,  
Who's caring?  
For buds will blow and winds must go,  
If he comes not back, who'll know, who'll know  
That she's lain caressed on the Wind's warm breast?  
If he dares, who cares?

The bold Wave kisses the Lily's mouth,  
So daring!  
Though she knows he is fleeing away to the south,  
Who's caring?  
For buds will blow and streams must flow,  
He will ne'er come back. Who'll know, who'll know  
That she lay so fair on his bosom bare?  
If he dares, who cares?

My Love, he kisses me while he may,  
So daring!  
I turn not away nor say him nay,  
Who's caring?  
For lips will glow and my Love must go,  
As the Wind and the Wave. Who'll know, who'll  
know  
That I reeled with bliss 'neath my Love's warm  
kiss?  
If he dares, who cares?

## EXCERPTS

*From "A Memory of Santa Barbara"*

### I

The sunset ! Ah, my pen must falter now.  
Not gorgeous, as in your far southern clime,  
For all the sky is cloudless, crystalline.  
But over ocean, islands, mountains, town,  
The sun flings off his pearl and amber robe,  
Thin, delicate, transforming, tender-hued ;  
Thus, till the sun is gone ; then wondrous change  
As though an unseen hand had flung the doors  
Of hidden fires, the mountains flame and flare  
With fervid glows ; the grey-pink mists  
That wrap the vales take on resplendent hues ;  
The town bursts out in unconsuming blaze ;  
And lo ! the islands — burning ships that sail  
A blood-red sea !

### II

O burning, cooling wine of woman's love !  
O tempting mouth, O sweet, rebuking eyes !  
Who drinks in sips, when to his panting lips  
The chalice deep of woman's love is held ?  
Nay, nay, he drinks and swoons and drinks again,  
Till reason stagger, all his senses flame  
And cry for more, although they reel. Then he,  
Like many another drunkard, deeper drinks !

### III

The gift of life from God ! Ah me, ah me,  
What shall we do with gifts unsought, unasked ?  
Who sues for birth ? Who asks for form and  
breath ?

And tell me, *is* life God's and heaven's gift,  
Or earth's, all sad and passion-saturate?  
Not God's. We lie upon the lap of Fate,  
Our one inheritance a form of clay  
Around a soul of fire; our only speech  
A wail for love, a hungry wail for love.  
Earth's love, or heaven's love — which shall it be?  
Upon this question hangs all destiny.  
And if the soul's best love delay — what then?  
The hunger grows and gnaws. Will not the bird  
Across the desert, lacking mountain spring,  
Athirst, descend to any noisome pool?  
The hunger gnaws, life's woeful heritage;  
Earth's love is proffered, urged — and then . . .  
and then?



SONGS FROM "ILA"



# I

Out on the wing of the wide restless sea,  
Out on the sweep of the tide wild and free,  
Lashing in anger or leaping in glee,  
How have I sought, O my heart's love, for thee!

Out on the wing of the wind swift and strong,  
Out on its life-quest my soul swept along,  
Scanning the desert and searching the throng,  
How have I sought thee, thou soul of my song!

Out on the wing of love's tireless will,  
Urged by my longing I search for thee still,  
As the sea clasps the brook to his breast warm  
and fast,  
So I'll hold thee, and fold thee, and own thee at  
last.

## II

The sea was as calm as the cloudless heaven  
    Until the siren moon drew near,  
And then the waves by a mad wish driven,  
    Leaping, strove for her silver sphere.  
They sprang, they reached in a helpless fashion,  
    Rose to break with a ceaseless roar,  
Rose to fall in their baffled passion,  
    And lash the rocks of their stubborn shore.

My heart was as calm as the tideless ocean,  
    Until your eyes shone o'er its wave,  
And then it woke with a startled motion,  
    And all its strength to a vain hope gave.  
Now nevermore shall its calm, returning,  
    Yield back the peace that my soul forsook.  
O sad sea, torn by a hopeless yearning!  
    O heart, disturbed by a fleeting look!

### III

Lo! I found thy lips all lifeless,  
Chill, so chill!  
And I touched, besought them, pressed them,  
Thrilled them, till  
They grew brighter, glowing, burning,  
Till apart from mine a yearning  
Strong compelled them to returning  
'Gainst thy will.

Lo! I found thy breast like snowdrift,  
Calm and cold;  
And I took thee, and my arms did  
Thee enfold.  
Now that calm hath thee forsaken,  
And thy breast is sweetly shaken;  
Wilt thou from thy dream awaken  
In my hold?

All thy woman's soul lay smouldering  
Till my hand  
Lifeless embers into fires  
Gently fanned.  
Now that wondrous flame forever  
Must defy e'en death's endeavor.  
O my heart's Love, wilt thou never  
Understand?

#### IV

Upon the sea, the boundless sea,  
I gaze, and I am mute.  
What is its breadth, and what its depth,  
In fathoms who'll compute?  
Oh, the patience! Oh, the passion!  
Steadfast sky, and surging sea;  
Oh, the torment! Oh, the triumph!  
Fettered still, though free.

Into thy soul, thy wondrous soul,  
I gaze, and I am lost.  
What is its breadth and what its depth?  
Of gazing what the cost?  
Oh, the passion! Oh, the patience!  
Human heart and God above;  
Oh, the triumph! Oh the torment!  
Free, yet finite,—love!

I have dreamed of joyous springtime  
With its wealth of blossoms fair,  
With its laughing waters leaping  
High into the sunny air;  
But last night I dreamed, and sweeter  
Than the spring that I adore,  
Came a vision, and it seemed that  
I had never dreamed before.

I have dreamed of yonder heaven,  
With its flood of golden light,  
I have dreamed of soft-eyed angels  
With their crowns, but oh, last night  
Brought to me an image fairer  
Than have all the nights of yore,  
And at morn I felt that I had  
Never, never dreamed before.

Faded now the springtime fancy,  
Gone the heaven without regret,  
But that last sweet glimpse in dreamland,  
How can e'er my soul forget?  
For you came and knelt beside me,  
Came to linger evermore,  
And O Heart, I know I never,  
Never dreamed nor loved before!

## VI

The rose, though chilled by autumn's frosty hand,  
The south wind's fervent kiss can not forget;  
The shell, though cast alone upon the sand,  
Forever murmurs forth its sad regret.

Can I forget? Oh, think not that my heart  
Is fragile as the rose at spring's farewell;  
Nor that my life, though torn from thine apart,  
Can be less constant than a dead sea-shell!



## EXCERPTS FROM "ILA"



## I

For there are silences  
More full than speech, more steeped in eloquence;  
And there are times when souls have no more need  
Of words than have the roses need of rain  
When drunk with dew.

## II

O morrow, ghost of all intention fair!  
O shadow of fulfilment unfulfilled!  
O veil unlifted, could we see beyond,  
What plans unfollowed, promises unkept,  
What duties still undone would we behold!

## III

For human destinies have countless threads,  
And each life has its pattern planned of God.  
How can we know if through our neighbor's web  
Are woven threads of our own weal or woe?  
And who can stay the busy Weaver's hand  
To find if all the woof be his or not?

## IV

The old man listened with his eyes half closed.  
"Love and the sea," he muttered, "Ay, so like!  
The same unceasing restlessness, the same  
Unmeasured depth, the same wild longing for  
What can not be, the surging up a height  
It can not hold. 'Triumph and torment,' yes,  
Yes, that is love—love and the sea. Sing on!"

## V

"Fool, fool," he muttering said,  
 "To think a woman's love could over-live,  
 To think a woman's love could over-last  
 The silence and the absence of two years!  
 Would not the river fail but for the snow  
 That falls upon the mountain-top? Would not  
 The rose-tree fade, but that the sun returns  
 With fervent haste? And will not fire die  
 With naught to feed on? What! a woman true,  
 With hands unpressed, and lips unkissed, and ears  
 That hear not 'Sweet, I love you,' every hour?  
 Nay, nay, I was a fool!"

## VI

The things we plan with nicest care are those  
 Which seldom fall according to our plan.  
 We only hold life's many threads for Fate,  
 That she may weave a pattern to her whim.

## VII

The sun rose bright above the eastern hill  
 To gaze reproachful on the haggard moon  
 That stood, night-reveler at dawn of day,  
 Upon the threshold of the starless west.

## VIII—THE STORM

She knew the sun was gone,  
Although no flush shone from the blackened west.  
'Neath such a sky, the space 'twixt day and night  
Is but a breath. While yet she stood, the light  
Fell off; shore merged into the sea, sea blent  
With murky sky, and downward rushed the night.  
The storm-fiends came upon night's trackless wake.  
They twisted branches from the mighty oaks,  
And wrenched and rocked the sturdy trunks them-  
selves;

They tore away the jessamine, and stretched  
Her bruised form before the pillar's foot;  
They hurled the hissing rain against the pane  
In Ila's very face — poor anxious face! —  
And laughed exultantly. They drove the clouds  
In thickening troops before her straining eyes  
That sought the village and the shoreward lights,  
And Tempter's Point, where burned a single gleam  
Of warning fire. They freed the chafing winds,  
That shrieked and howled like demons loosed;  
they stirred

The sea to mighty anger, heaped the waves  
Toward the lowering heavens, flung them down,  
And landward drove them with resistless force.  
They rent the purple curtains of the night  
With swords of lurid lightnings, danced like ghosts  
Upon the wave-tops of the swelling sea;  
Found tongue in all the tumult of the night:  
The sea-birds' screams, the whistling of the winds,  
The thunder's roll, the bellowing of the surf.  
They raved, they roared with such defiant voice,  
That though as solid as the rocks themselves,  
The unmoved witness of unnumbered storms,  
The great "Crest" shuddered to its nether stones.

. . . . . She stood  
Upon the cliff-face, clinging to the rock.  
But little could she see: a blackened gulf  
Down-stretched beneath her feet; the murky skies,  
Torn by rude lightnings in whose jagged flash  
The massing foam that far below was churned  
To madly running breakers, whitely gleamed.

. . . . . But she could hear  
Rain, breakers, thunder, crash on deafening crash,  
The gurge of pouring torrents o'er the rocks,  
The cries of gulls, the shrieking of the wind,  
The unchecked hurricane, the tortured sea,  
And all the countless voices of the deep.  
She did not fear the tempest. Many a night  
As black, as wild, her soul had thrilled to hear  
Deep call to deep in loud exultancy,  
To matchless symphony of rhythmic wave.  
Ay, she had watched the storm and felt her soul  
Uplift to reach, expand to grasp the faith,  
The perfect peace of God that knows no fear.

#### IX—THE SHIP-WRECK

. . . . . She sees  
A strong ship urge her frothing way among  
The rushing waters, sees her stretch her arms  
All wet and white as if in mute appeal  
For aid against her fast-increasing foes.  
She sees her plunge and rise and plunge again,  
And leap from crested wave to crested wave;  
A phantom seems she, flying fast before  
Compelling winds, her ghostly pinions spread  
Above the blackened surges' yawning graves.

On, on, the doomèd barque speeds blindly on,  
Toward the cruel reefs that lie before;  
On, on, poor barque, upon whose lonely way,  
Red lightnings flame and fade with mocking play.  
Down swoop the mighty winds: they snatch her  
sails,  
They strip her huge arms, leave them cold and bare;  
But still she struggles fiercely with the gale,  
Though shuddering now from deck to lowest keel.  
A crash! her tall mast plunges to the wave —  
God pity her! the reefs lie just before.  
She quakes, she reels, she totters on her way,  
As one or wild, or drunk with mad despair.  
See, see! she strikes the rocks — unnumbered  
points  
Go lunging through her ribs of sturdy oak.  
She sways, careens, strives feebly to arise,  
But downward settles deeper, deeper still.  
The hungry billows surge about her form,  
Till one, more fearless, rushes o'er her head,  
Then 'boldened, gathers all his legions round,  
That sweep in circles ever narrowing,  
Until they crouch beside her for the spring.  
A mighty, seething sea — a helpless ship,  
An angry, ruthless sea — a hopeless ship,  
A cruel sea — a God-abandoned ship,  
A sea triumphant now — no ship, no ship!

X—AFTER THE STORM

Calm, radiant, transcendent broke the morn  
Upon the ruin that the night had wrought.  
Oh, sweetly, tenderly above the flowers,  
The bowed and stricken flowers, did Nature stoop  
And lift and heal each leaf with gentle touch.  
She beamed with warming pride upon the oaks,  
That drew erect and thrilled beneath her glance;  
She coaxed the hidden birds to come and sing  
Within their wounded arms; she touched the tears  
Upon the meadow's cheeks, and they became  
Pure diamonds, flashing, blazing in the light.  
Upon her breast she hushed the moaning sea,  
And chided him, until to win her smile,  
He crept and kissed the great rock's spurning  
foot;  
And soothing and caressing, thus she wooed  
And won them all to peace and love again —  
Birds, flowers, winds, the woodlands and the sea.  
For Nature is forgiving. Tempest's wrath  
And earthquake's shock spread chaos o'er the land,  
And scar and blot and ravage and destroy.  
Does Nature then her vengeance hurl, or give  
Herself to vain repinings or despair?  
Ah no! with gentle hands she mends and heals,  
Forgets the insult, blesses and forgives.



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